Serial No.   10/509,969   Docket No. PU020085
Art Unit   2622   Customer No. 24498

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully reviewed the Official action mailed 12 February 2009.
As now pending claims 1-24 patentably distinguish over the art of record for the reasons
given below. For that reason, applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Before proceeding to address the rejection, applicants will briefly summarize their
invention to assist the examiner in better appreciating the differences between applicants'
·invention and the art of record. Applicants' invention, as recited in claim 1, concerns a
processing apparatus that includes a first module having a controller capable of
performing one of a plurality of signal processing schemes. Upon coupling a second
module to the first module, the controller associated with the first module will determine
an input-output characteristic of the second module and will select a signal-processing
scheme in accordance with that input-output coupling characteristic.

35 U.S.C. 102(b) Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 8, 12-21, and 23-24

Claims 1, 2, 8, 12-21, and 23-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as
anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,188,381, issued in the name of Gooitzen Siemen van der Wal
et al (hereinafter, the van der Wal et al. patent). To that end, the examiner asserts that the
van der Wal et al. patent teaches a system that includes a processing motherboard (PM)
10 coupled via a global video bus (GVB) 30 and via a global control bus (GCB) 40 to one
or more video processing modules (VPMs) 20 that each perform a dedicated video
processing operation. Since the PM 10 provides command and control of the video
processing operations, the examiner maintains that the van der Wal et al. patent would
anticipate applicants' claims.

Applicants' independent claim 1 recites the feature that the first module
determines the input-output characteristic of the second module. In accordance with that
input-output characteristic, the controller of the first module selects a particular
processing scheme. This feature of claim 1, as incorporated by reference in claims 4-6
and 8, lacks disclosure or suggestion in the van der Wal et al. patent.

Notwithstanding the examiner's assertion to the contrary, the disclosure appearing

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at Cols. 5-7 of the van der Wal et al. contains no teaching or suggestion that the PM 10 detects or determines an input-output characteristic of the VPM 20, let alone that the PM 10 selects a processing scheme in accordance with such input-output characteristic.

At best, the disclosure appearing at Col. 6, lines 6-65 of the van der Wal et al. patent suggests that each VPM 20 provides video information through the GVB 30 to the PM 10 which then performs one or image operations. However, the disclosure at Col. 6, lines 6-65 says nothing concerning the input-output characteristic of the VPM 20, and in particular, that the PM 10 detects the input-output characteristic of the VPM 20 in order to select the desired processing operation. Applicants acknowledge that the disclosure at Col. 15, lines 5-25 of the van der Wal et al. patent alludes to the capability of the PM 10 to detect which boards (i.e., which VPM 20) enjoy a connection to the PM 10. However, such disclosure in the van der Wal et al. patent still does not teach or in any way suggest the feature of having a controller *select one of a plurality of processing schemes based on a characteristic of the second module*, as recited in claim 1, and as incorporated by reference in claims 4-6 and 8.

The examiner has not demonstrated that van der Wal et al. patent discloses *each and every* feature of applicants' claims 1, 4-6 and 8. In particular, the examiner has not demonstrated that the PM 10 of van der Wal et al. selects from a plurality of processing schemes a particular scheme determined in accordance with an input-output characteristic of the second module. Accordingly, applicants' claims 1, 4-6 and 8 possess novelty over this reference.

Claim 12 recites a processing apparatus for audio and video that includes the feature that the first module determines a signal-processing characteristic of the second module. In accordance with the signal-processing characteristic, the controller of the first module selects a particular processing scheme. This feature of claim 12, as incorporated by reference in claims 13-14, lacks disclosure in the van der Wal et al. patent. As discussed above, at best, the van der Wal et al. patent teaches the ability to detect the identity of each VPM 20 connected to the PM 10. However, no disclosure or suggestion exists in the van der Wal et al. of the desirability of establishing the processing scheme implemented by the PM 10 in accordance with the characteristic of the VPM 20.

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The van der Wal et al. patent fails to disclose each and every feature of applicants' claims 12-14 because the reference does not teach or suggest applicants' processing apparatus wherein the controller in the first module selecting its processing scheme in accordance with the processing scheme utilized by the second module. Therefore, claim 12, and claims 13-14 that depend therefrom, possess novelty over the reference.

Claim 15 recites a video processing apparatus that includes a signal processor that establishes a signal-processing characteristic from one of a plurality of such characteristics stored in a memory. The processor establishes the particular signal-processing characteristic in accordance with a signal from a network interface. The van der Wal et al. patent does not teach this feature of applicants' claim 15, nor claims 16-17, and 19-20, which depend therefrom and incorporate by reference the features of their parent claim. The van der Wal et al. patent does not teach the feature of having the processor establish its processing scheme in accordance with a signal from the network interface. The disclosure at Col. 27, lines 26-46 of the van der Wal et al. clearly suggests that selection of the processing scheme remains the decision of a human programmer, rather than occurring automatically in response to a signal from the network interface. Accordingly, claims 15-17 and 19-20 patentably distinguish over the van der Wal et al. patent.

Applicants' claim 21 recites a method of configuring a multi-function signal-processing apparatus for users that require less than all available functions. The apparatus stores a signal-processing characteristic for all available functions, but only a limited number of functions become enabled. After enablement of the limited number of functions, the remaining functions become non-accessible. Claims 23-24 depend from claim 21 and incorporate by reference all of the features of their parent claim.

The van der Wal et al. patent provides no disclosure teaching or suggesting the desirability of enabling less than all features in a signal processing apparatus, and thereafter preventing access to such non-enabled features. Indeed, the disclosure in the van der Wal et al. of providing a PM 10 with the full ability to control the video processing would teach away from applicants' feature of intentionally limiting the capability of the signal processing apparatus. Accordingly, claim 21 and claims 23-24 which depend therefrom, possess novelty over the van der Wal et al. patent.

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35 U.S.C. 103(a) Rejection of Claims 3-7, 9-11 and 22

Claims 3-7, 9-11, 18 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over the van der Wal et al. patent discussed above in connection with the rejection of claims 1, 2, 8, 12-21 and 23-24. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants' claims 3-7 and 9-11 depend from claim 1 and incorporate by reference all of the features thereof. As discussed previously with regard to the rejection of claim 1, the van der Wal et al. patent does not teach applicants' feature of establishing the signal-processing scheme of the controller of a first module in accordance with an input-output characteristic of a second module. Thus, the van der Wal et al. patent does not teach *each and every* feature of claim 1, nor would the patent teach each and every feature of claims 3-7 and 9-11 which depend from claim 1. Since the van der Wal et al. patent does not teach all of the features of claims 3-7 and 9-11, the patent cannot render obvious these claims. Accordingly, claims 3-7 and 9-11 possess inventive step over the van der Wal et al. patent.

Claim 18 depends from 15 and incorporates the feature that access to the signal-processing characteristic is accordance to the selling price. In rejecting this claim, the examiner contends that controlling access according to sales price does not constitute an invention. In this regard, the examiner maintains that the compatibility between modules will depend on the type of module. The rejection appears predicated on what the examiner defines as applicants' invention, not what applicant has actually claimed.

As recited in claim 18, applicants have invented a signal processing apparatus that affords different signal processing capabilities based on price, without the need to alter the processor structure. During manufacture, the memory becomes imbued with all possible signal-processing schemes. However, the customer can elect restricted access to the full range of signal processing schemes by electing to pay a reduced price. Access to available signal-processing schemes does indeed depend on price. As compared to the van der Wal et al. patent in which the PM 10 can make use of all available processing schemes, applicants' signal-processing apparatus of claim 18 affords a mechanism for

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limiting the availability of processing schemes. Claim 18 recites patentable subject matter.

Claim 22 depends from claim 21 and incorporates by reference all of the features of its parent claim. As discussed above, the van der Wal et al. patent does not teach each and every feature of claim 21, and thus claim 22, like claim 21 posses both novelty and inventive step over the art of record.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, applicants solicit entry of this amendment and allowance of the claims. If the Examiner cannot take such action, the Examiner should contact the applicant's attorney at (609) 734-6820 to arrange a mutually convenient date and time for a telephonic interview.

No fees are believed due with regard to this Amendment. Please charge and fee or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 07-0832.

Respectfully submitted,
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